Islamic Academy of Coventry

Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Part 5 -The Trials & Tribulations of the Early Muslims

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Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ
Part 5 - The Trials & Tribulations of the Early Muslims
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بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

I begin in the name of Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ Lord of the Worlds and sending Peace & Salutations on our beloved Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

The period of the final Prophecy had begun. What started with our father ʿĀdam عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ many thousands of years ago was now culminating with a man from the progeny of Ibrāhīm عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ. The Seal of the Prophets, Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

The first Revelation had come inside a cave called Ḥirā', which was on top of a mountain called Jabl Nūr on the outskirts of Makkah.

Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ sent down the greatest Angel - Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ, in the greatest place - Makkatul Mukarramah, on the greatest night – Laylatul Qadr, with the greatest Revelation – The Qur'ān to the greatest man – Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

The first few verses of Sūrah Al-ʿAlaq were revealed and Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ returned home to inform his wife, Khadījah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا. She took him to her cousin, Waraqah ibn Naufal who confirmed that this message had indeed come from the same Angel who had brought the Revelation to Mūsā' عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ, confirming it was divine.

The people nearest and dearest to him accepted his message and embraced Islām. His wife, children as well as the other members of his household and dearest friend Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ became the first ones to answer his call towards Allāh سُبْحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ. The early Muslims would congregate in the house of Arqam رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ near the mountain Aṣ-Ṣafā.

For the first few years, the call to Islām was done privately, then Allāh سُبْحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent down the verses of Sūrah As-Shuʿarā':

"And warn the nearest people of your clan, and be kind with humbleness to the believers who followed you".

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then called the Quraysh and invited them towards Islām. Abū Lahab, the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ openly rejected his call and made his 2 sons who were married to the daughters of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, divorce their wives.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ continued to call people towards the truth and the Quraysh became more and more worried. They sent delegations to the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Abū Ṭālib, to persuade his nephew to stop preaching. But he would not stop and Abū Ṭālib continued to support his nephew even though he himself had not embraced.

The Quraysh tried to tell everyone who came to the Baitullāh for pilgrimage, that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was a magician who caused differences between family members. This plan back fired, and even more people were now aware of the new Prophet.

The Quraysh changed their approach and tried to appease Rasūlullāh ﷺ by offering him everything, but he refused and Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ revealed Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn.

The Quraysh then sought help from the Jews in Madīnah as they had knowledge of the Prophets and Scriptures. They provided them with questions which would confirm one way or the other, whether Rasūlullāh ﷺ was a true Prophet.

The questions were posed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent down Revelation to answer them. Even this didn't appease the Quraysh. They would now try even more desperately to stop the message of Islām by any means necessary.



The Quraysh

Makkah was controlled by the great tribe of Quraysh who were descendants of Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ through the children of Ismāʿīl عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ. Their forefather Qusayy, the father of ʿAbd Manāf had become the Guardian of the House of Allāh after his father in law Ḥulayl passed away.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came from the Banū Hāshim, the children of Hāshim and one of their responsibilities was to look after the pilgrims who would come to visit the House of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ.

Even though Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came from the same tribe, many of the Quraysh including members of his own family did not embrace Islām. Some of them supported him, even though they did not embrace, like his uncle Abū Ṭālib, whilst others declared their enmity openly and did whatever they could to stop Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his message.

القريش

ʿAmr ibn Hishām – Abū Jahl

One of the most notorious enemies of Islām was ʿAmr ibn Hishām, also more famously known as Abū Jahl. This name was given to him by Rasūlullāh ﷺ and means 'father of ignorance'. He was the 'Firʿaun' (Pharaoh) of the Ummah of Rasulullāh ﷺ.

He was also known by the Quraysh as Abū Al-Ḥakam which means 'father of wisdom', due to his intelligence and wisdom.

Abū Jahl left no stone unturned in trying to cause as much harm as possible to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the early Muslims.

One incident is narrated in both Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim by ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ. On one occasion Rasūlullāh ﷺ was praying near the Kaʿbah. Abū Jahl and his companions were sitting nearby. The previous day a camel had been slaughtered. Abū Jahl asked his companions, which one of them would go and fetch the foetus of this slaughtered camel and then place it between the shoulders of Rasūlullāh ﷺ when he goes down in prostration?



One of his companions did what Abū Jahl asked and placed the foetus of the dead camel between Rasūlullāh ﷺ blessed

shoulders when he went into Sajdah. Abū Jahl and his companions started laughing so much, that they were leaning on each other.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ was watching all of this take place and said that if he had the power he would have thrown the camels foetus away from the back of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ stayed in Sajdah and didn't raise his head until a man went and informed his daughter, Fāṭimah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهَا who was still a young girl at the time. She came and removed the camel foetus from the back of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, then turned towards Abū Jahl and his companions and rebuked them.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ finished his Salāt, he raised his voice and supplicated to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ against them. He done this 3 times and then invoked Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ and said 'Oh Allāh it is for you to deal with the Quraysh'.

When Abū Jahl and his companions heard the words of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, their laughter went away, and they feared his supplication.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said:

اللَّهُمَّ عَلَيْكَ بِأَبِي جَهْلِ بْنِ هِشَامٍ وَعُتْبَةَ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ وَشَيْبَةَ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ وَالْوَلِيدِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ وَأُمَيَّةَ بْنِ خَلَفٍ وَعُقْبَةَ بْنِ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ

'Oh Allāh, it is for you to deal with Abū Jahl ibn Hishām & ʿUtbah ibn Rabīʿah & Shaybah ibn Rabīʿah & Walīd ibn ʿUqbah & Ummayah ibn Khalaf & ʿUqbah ibn Abū Muʿayt'

A seventh person was also mentioned but ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ didn't remember his name.

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ answered the prayer of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and all those mentioned, met their fateful end on the day of Badr.

Abū Lahab ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib

Abū Lahab has already been mentioned previously. He was the paternal uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as well as the father in law of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ two daughters, Ruqayyah and Umme Kulthūm رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ invited the Quraysh to come to Islām, Abū Lahab was the first to deny the call. Abū Lahabs wife, Umm Jamīl bint Ḥarb who was the sister of Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, also joined her husband in making life difficult for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. She used to collect thorny branches and lay them in the path of Rasūlullāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ to harm him.



Abū Lahab was very wealthy. Whenever he would be warned about Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ punishment, he would say that if my nephews' words are true, then on the Day of Judgement, I will escape the punishment by ransoming myself, with my wealth and children.

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent down Sūrah Lahab which had news of what awaited the unfortunate couple. We shall find out later what Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ had planned for them.

Ummayah ibn Khalaf & Ubayy ibn Khalaf.

Both were brothers who declared their open enmity towards Islām. Ummayah used to openly swear at Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ then revealed Sūrah Al-Humazah about Ummayah ibn Khalaf.

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ (١) ٱلَّذِى جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُۥ (٢)

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُۥٓ أَخْلَدَهُۥ (٣) كَلَّا ۖ لَيُنۢبَذَنَّ فِى ٱلْحُطَمَةِ (٤)

وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا ٱلْحُطَمَةُ (٥) نَارُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمُوقَدَةُ (٦)

ٱلَّتِى تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى ٱلْأَفْـِٔدَةِ (٧) إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ (٨)

فِى عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍۭ (٩)[1]

"Woe to every backbiter, derider (1) Who accumulates wealth and counts it. (2) He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal. (3) Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crushing Fire. (4) And what may let you know what the Crushing Fire is? (5) It is Allāh's kindled fire (6) That will peep into the hearts. (7) It will be closed on them, (8) In outstretched columns. (9)"

Ummayah ibn Khalaf was killed in the Battle of Badr by either Khubayb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ or Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

[1] Sūrah Al-Humazah

On one occasion, Umayyahs brother Ubayy came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ with an old bone and said 'Will Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى make this alive again?' Rasūlullāh ﷺ said 'Yes and your bones as well when they become like this, he will make you alive again and throw you in the fire'. The following verses were revealed which are the final verses in Surah Yāsīn:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُۥ ۖ قَالَ مَن يُحْيِ ٱلْعِظَـٰمَ وَهِىَ
رَمِيمٌ (٧٨) قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ
(٧٩) ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلشَّجَرِ ٱلْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَآ أَنتُم مِّنْهُ
تُوقِدُونَ (٨٠) أَوَلَيْسَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ بِقَـٰدِرٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَن
يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُم ۚ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ ٱلْخَلَّـٰقُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ (٨١) إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا
أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ (٨٢) فَسُبْحَـٰنَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِۦ مَلَكُوتُ
كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٨٣)[2]

"He has set up an argument about Us and forgot his creation. He said, "Who will give life to the bones when they are decayed?" (78) Say, "These will be revived by the same One who had created them for the first time, and who is

[2] Sūrah Yāsīn verse 78-83

fully aware of every creation, (79) The One who created for you fire from the green tree, and in no time you kindle from it." (80) Is it that the One who has created the heavens and the earth has no power to create ones like them? Why not? He is the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing. (81) His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says, "Be", and it comes to be. (82) So, pure (from every fault) is the One in whose hand is the dominion of all things. And towards Him you are to be returned. (83)"

Ubayy ibn Khalaf was killed in the battle of Uḥud by the hands of the Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ himself.

ʿUqbah ibn Abū Muʿīṭ

ʿUqbah, was a good friend of Ubayy ibn Khalaf. One day he came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and sat close by to listen to him. When Ubayy found out about this, he immediately went to ʿUqbah. Ubayy told him that he had received news that he was sat with Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and listening to his words. He then said 'I swear by god, until you go and spit on the face of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ it will be ḥarām (impermissible) for me to talk to you or see your face'

ʿUqbah got up and went and spat on the blessed face of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The following verses were then revealed which are in Sūrah Al-Furqān:

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ ٱلظَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَـٰلَيْتَنِى ٱتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ ٱلرَّسُولِ
سَبِيلاً (٢٧) يَـٰوَيْلَتَىٰ لَيْتَنِى لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلاً (٢٨)
لَقَدْ اَضَلَّنِىْ عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ اِذْ جَآءَنِىْ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِلْاِنْسَانِ
خَذُوْلًا (٢٩) وَقَالَ ٱلرَّسُولُ يَـٰرَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِى ٱتَّخَذُواْ هَـٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ
مَهْجُورًا (٣٠) وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ
بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا (٣١) [3]

"And (Be mindful of) the Day the wrongdoer will bite his hands saying, "Would that I had taken a path along with the Messenger! (27) Woe to me! Would that I had not taken so-and-so for my friend! (28) Indeed, he led me astray from the advice after it had come to me." And the Satan is man's betrayer. (29) And the Messenger will say, "O my Lord, my people had taken this Qur'an as deserted." (30) In a similar way We made for every prophet an enemy from among the sinners, but your Lord suffices as a guide and as a supporter.(31)"

[3] Sūrah Al-Furqān verse 27-31

The One who is 'Cut Off'

There were many other staunch enemies of Rasūlullah ﷺ including Walīd ibn Mughirah, Abū Qays ibn al Fāka, Naḍr ibn Hārith and ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ sons passed away, ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il said:

ان محمدا ابتر لا يعيش له ولد

Indeed Muḥammad ﷺ is 'abtar', none of his sons remain alive.

ʿĀṣ used the word 'abtar', which was the term used for an animal whose tail has been cut off. The person who has no male offspring to carry his name forward was also referred to as 'abtar'

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ then revealed the following verse from Sūrah Al-Kauthar:

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ ٱلْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾[4]

"Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off."

[4] Sūrah Al-Kauthar verse 3

There are millions and millions of people who remember Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ even though he had no male offspring who survived till adulthood.

One month after the Hijrah (Migration), an animal bit ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il on his leg. This caused his leg to swell so much that it was like the neck of a camel. And this led to the sad end of ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il.



The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

As Islām spread and the number of Muslims began to increase, the anger and enmity of the polytheists also began to increase. They could not cause much harm to those Muslims who had supporters or helpers, but those Muslims who had no protection, who were destitute & helpless became their targets for oppression.

Some of the Muslims were attacked physically, others were denied food and drink. Some of them were laid on hot stones in the middle of the day when the sun was at its hottest whilst others were tied up. Many incidents took place which shows us how much suffering they had to undergo and how much patience they had to have, in the face of such oppression. Some of these blessed Companions will now be mentioned.



Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ

Bilāl رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ was from the Land of Abyssinia which would today be part of present-day Ethiopia.



He was the slave of Umayyah ibn Khalaf and had embraced Islām. This led to all kinds of torture being inflicted upon him. In the intense heat of the day when the rocks used to heat up, Umayyah would order the other slaves to lay Bilāl رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ on these boiling rocks and then place a large rock on his chest so he can't move.

Umayyah would then say to him, 'You will die like this, if you want to be free from this then turn away from Muḥammad ﷺ and follow Lāt and 'Uzza' which were names of their idols. Even then there was only one thing on the tongue of Bilāl, Aḥad, Aḥad.



Sometimes they would wrap Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the hide of a cow and other times they would put metal armour on him and make him sit in the intense heat of the sun. Even then, there was only one word on his tongue.

When Umayyah saw that these punishments were not having an affect on him, he tied a rope around his neck and made him get dragged throughout the city, even then only one word on his lips.

On one occasion when he was being tortured, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed by and his heart filled with pity. He said to Umayyah that he has a slave who is very strong and also on their religion. Take him and in exchange hand over Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to me. Umayyah agreed and as soon as Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was handed over to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, he was freed.

The torture and suffering of Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was so severe that the scars and marks of this could be seen on his body whenever he exposed his back.

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ gave Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ such a status that he was the first Mu'adhin in Islām. On the day of the conquest of Makkah, he was the one who climbed the Kaᶜbah and called out the Adhān. Imagine how those people who had caused him so much suffering felt when they saw this person who was tortured, humiliated now being given such a high status in Islām.

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ gives respect to whoever he wishes.



The family of ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Yāsir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had arrived in Makkah in search of one of his brothers who was lost. His two brothers, Ḥārith and Mālik were also with him. Ḥārith and Mālik returned to Yemen whilst Yāsir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ remained behind in Makkah. He become friends with Abū Ḥudhayfah Makhzūmī. who gave his slave girl, Sumayyah bint Khiyāṭ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا in marriage to Yāsir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Together they had a son who they named ʿAmmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. They all stayed with Abū Ḥudhayfah until he passed away.



When Islām appeared, ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and his whole family including his brother ʿAbdullāh all embraced. ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had no tribe or family in Makkah or anyone who would protect him, so the Quraysh caused him and his family a lot of difficulty.

They would lay him on the burning ground during the hottest part of the day and beat him until he became unconscious. Sometimes they would try to drown him and sometimes lay him on hot coals.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to go past him in this state, he used to pass his blessed hands on ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ head and pray

يا نار كوني بردا و سلاما على عمار كما كنت على ابراهيم

‘Oh fire, become cold and peaceful for ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ like how you became cold and peaceful for Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ’

When Rasūlullāh رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ used to see the family of ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ in difficulty, he used to tell them to have patience. Both of ʿAmmār رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ parents passed away due to this persecution. His mother Sumayyah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهَا was the first female martyr in Islām.

Ṣuhayb رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ

Another Companion who underwent great suffering was Ṣuhayb رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ. He sacrificed all his worldly possessions and left them for the Quraysh, just so he could migrate to Madīnah.

He arrived in Madīnah and told Rasūlullāh رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ what had happened. Rasūlullāh رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ said that he had made a great profit from this transaction.

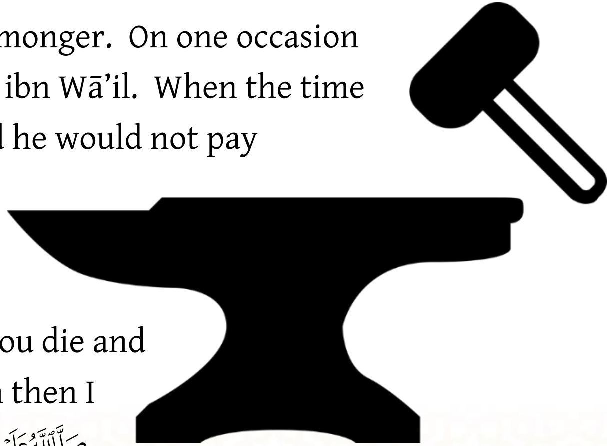
Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ also revealed the following verse with regards to this event

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ
بِٱلْعِبَادِ (٢٠٧)[5]

"And among men there is one who sells his very soul to seek the pleasure of Allāh, and Allāh is Very-Kind to His servants"

Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a slave who was one of the early reverts to Islām. He also went through great difficulty and hardships.



Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was an iron monger. On one occasion he had made a sword for ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il. When the time came for him to pay, ʿĀṣ said he would not pay him anything until he stopped believing in Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said that if you die and came back to life again, even then I will not deny Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. ʿĀṣ said, 'Will I be brought back to life after I die?' Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ told him that he would. ʿĀṣ then said, when Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ gives me death and then makes me come back to life a second time, and

[5] Sūrah Al-Baqarah verse 207

my wealth and children will be with me, that is when I will repay your debt.

Upon this Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ revealed the following verses:

أَفَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِى كَفَرَ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتَيَنَّ مَالاً وَوَلَدًا (٧٧) أَطَّلَعَ
ٱلْغَيْبَ أَمِ ٱتَّخَذَ عِندَ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ عَهْدًا (٧٨) كَلَّا ۚ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ
وَنَمُدُّ لَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ مَدًّا (٧٩)[6]

"Have you, then, seen him who rejected Our verses and said, "I shall certainly be given wealth and children"? (77) Has he peeped into the Unseen or taken a covenant with the All-Merciful (Allāh)? (78) Never! We will write what he says and extend for him the punishment extensively. (79)"

[6] Sūrah Maryam verse 77-79

The Splitting of the Moon

About 8 years into the Prophecy, some of the polytheists came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Among them were Walīd ibn Mughirah, Abū Jahl and ʿĀṣ ibn Wā'il. They said to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, that if you are a true Prophet then show us a sign. In another narration, they asked him to split the moon into two parts.

It was the 14th night, so the moon was full. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to them, if I show you this miracle, then will you bring faith? They all agreed. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made duʿā to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ and made a gesture towards the moon.

Suddenly the moon split into two parts and remained like this for a while. One part of the moon was seen above Jabl Qubays and another above Jabl Qay'Qaʿān. The people were astonished. They were rubbing their eyes with a cloth and then looking as they couldn't believe what they were seeing.



The moon stayed like this for around the same duration of time between ʿAṣr and Maghrib. Rasūlullāh ﷺ kept on telling the polythiests to say ish'hadu, bear witness, bear witness. The moon then returned to its normal state.

The polytheists turned to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and said you have done magic upon us. Let us wait for some people from outside to come to see if they also witnessed this. If they say they have, then we will believe what you have done.

Travellers started to come into Makkah and the polytheists started to question them, asking them if they had seen the moon split. They all bore witness that they had seen the moon split into two parts but still the polytheists refused to accept this and continued to deny. The following verses were then revealed:

ٱقْتَرَبَتِ ٱلسَّاعَةُ وَٱنشَقَّ ٱلْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾ وَإِن يَرَوْا۟ ءَايَةً يُعْرِضُوا۟ وَيَقُولُوا۟ سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾[7]

"The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has split asunder. (1) When these people see a sign, they turn away and say, "(This is) a transient magic. (2)"

[77] Sūrah Al-Qamar verse 1-2

The First Migration to Abyssinia

As the number of Muslims increased, the polytheists of Makkah found many ways to persecute the Muslims to try and stop the wave of Islām. Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ told his companions to spread themselves out in the land, so they asked him where they should go.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ told them to go to Ḥabashah, Abyssinia. He also told them that there is a king there who has never oppressed anyone.

The Muslims wanted to go to a place where they could practise Islām without being persecuted and in the month of Rajjab, in the 5th year of Prophethood, 11 men and 5 women left for Ḥabashah. They were:

- ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ and his wife Ruqayyah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا the daughter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ
- ʿAbdul Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ
- Zubayr ibn ʿAwwām رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ
- Abū Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ and his wife Sahla رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا
- Muṣʿab ibn ʿUmayr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ
- Abū Salamah and his wife Umme Salamah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا (she later married Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ)
- ʿUthmān ibn Maẓʿūn رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ
- ʿĀmir ibn Rabīʾah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ and his wife Layla رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا

- Suhayl ibn Bayḍā رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ
- Abū Subrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ and his wife Kulthūm رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا
- Ḥāṭib ibn ʿAmr رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ

These Companions left secretly, some were walking, whilst others were saddled. When they reached the coast, 2 trade boats were waiting to leave for Ḥabashah. They took 5 dirhams off the Companions and took them aboard. According to Ḥāfidh ʿAskalāni, they had got on the boat from Jeddah.



When the polytheists found out about the Companions leaving, they sent a person right away to catch them. By the time he got there, the boats had already left so his journey had been in vain.

Abyssinia

The ancient kingdom of Abyssinia was located around Eritrea and the Tigray region of Ethiopia. You can see from the map below, the distance the Companions travelled when they migrated there from Makkah. As to where exactly in the kingdom the migrants travelled, Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ knows best, but the ancient capital of Abyssinia was called Aksum.



The Companions stayed in Ḥabashah for the months of Rajjab and Shawwāl. They then received news in the month of Shawwāl that the people in Makkah had become Muslim, so they returned to Makkah.

When they got close to Makkah, they found out that this news was wrong which put them in a predicament. Some of them made their way into the city secretly, whilst others had to take refuge with another person and then enter Makkah.

The Second Migration to Abyssinia

Rasūlullāh ﷺ once again gave the Companions permission to emigrate to Ḥabashah. This time there were over 100 men & women.

When the Quraysh saw that the Muslims were living there peacefully and able to practise their religion freely, they decided to do something about it. They got together and had a meeting. The decision was made to send ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi Rabīʿah to Ḥabashah with gifts, so they can win the support of the Abyssinians. Once they have their support, they will agree to send back the migrants.

They both arrived in Ḥabashah and presented all the gifts to the people who were close to the King. They then



said that some of our people have left the religion of our forefathers and have sought refuge in your city. They left our religion and have not even accepted your faith, meaning Christianity, but they have embraced a new faith which neither us or you are familiar with. Our leaders have sent us to you so that you can hand these people over to us. Can you all ask your King to hand these people back to us without any form of conversation. ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi Rabīʿah were worried that the King would call the Muslims and ask them some questions.

ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi Rabīʿah then presented the Qurayshi gifts to Najjāshi. The people in the court who had already been briefed, asked the King to hand over the Companions to this delegation which had arrived from Makkah.

The concern which ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi Rabīʿah had, became a reality. Najjāshi got angry and said that he cannot just hand these people over without speaking to them first. How can it be that people who have come to his country to seek refuge, be handed over to people who oppose them without even an investigation.

Najjāshi then sent a person to call the Companions. The Messenger arrived with the Kings message and the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ discussed the matter. They decided that they would only say what Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has taught them in the court.

The Court of Najjāshi

The Companions arrived at the court and gave Salām. None of them prostrated in front of the King. The people in the court found this quite offensive and started to question them as to why they hadn't bowed down. In one narration it mentions that even the King Najjāshi asked why they hadn't prostrated.

Jaʿfar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ told them that we do not do Sajdah, we do not prostrate to anyone apart from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ. Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ has sent a Messenger to us and this is what he has commanded us to do.



Regarding the Salām, the Companions said, this is the way we greet Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and greet each other. Our Prophet صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ has told us that the people of Jannah, heaven will also greet each other like this.

Najjāshi then asked them about the religion they had embraced other than Christianity or Idol Worship. Jaʿfar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ stood up to give his answer.

He said, 'Oh King, we were all ignorant and simple, we used to worship idols and eat carrion. We were busy in all types of immodest actions. We used to cut relations with our close relatives, we used to behave badly with our neighbours. Whoever

was strong from among us, would wish to consume the weak. We were in this state when Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ sent down his bounty, he sent a Messenger from amongst us whose lineage and truthfulness, trustworthiness, and integrity we knew.

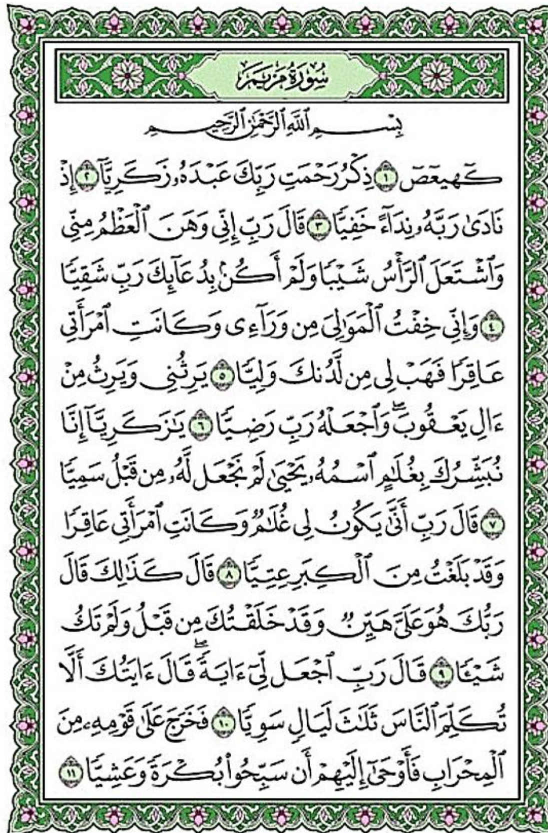
He called us to Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ, that we believe he is One and recognize him as One, understand he is One. Only worship him alone. All the idols and stones which we used to worship, and our forefathers used to worship, leave them at once. He commanded us to be truthful, trustworthy, to keep ties with our kin, be good to our neighbours, to keep away from causing bloodshed and impermissible talk.

He stopped us from doing all bad things, vain talk and falsehood, from eating the wealth of the orphan, to slandering a chaste pure woman. He commanded us to only worship Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ and not to adjoin any partners with him. That we read Ṣalāt and give Zakāt, and fast.

Jaʿfar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ mentioned other things as well about what Islām teaches and that they had affirmed this and brought faith upon it and everything which comes from Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ, we follow it. Due to this, our people have caused us all types of harm and persecuted us in many ways that we leave worshipping the one Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ and go back to our old ways.

When we got tired of this persecution and when it became difficult for us to follow our religion and our belief in One God, then we left our home with the hope that you will not oppress us.'

Najjāshi said, 'Can you remember any of the words which have come to your Prophet?' Jaʿfar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said yes. Najjāshi, then asked him to read some so he could listen to them. Jaʿfar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then started to recite the opening verses of Sūrah Maryam. Tears started to come out of the eyes of the King and all the people in the court.



سُورَةُ مَرْيَمَ

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

كٓهيعٓصٓ ١ ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُۥ زَكَرِيَّآ ٢ إِذْ
نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥ نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا ٣ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى وَهَنَ ٱلْعَظْمُ مِنِّى
وَٱشْتَعَلَ ٱلرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنۢ بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا
٤ وَإِنِّى خِفْتُ ٱلْمَوَٰلِىَ مِن وَرَآءِى وَكَانَتِ ٱمْرَأَتِى
عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِى مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا ٥ يَرِثُنِى وَيَرِثُ مِنْ
ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَٱجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ٦ يَٰزَكَرِيَّآ إِنَّا
نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَٰمٍ ٱسْمُهُۥ يَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مِن قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا
٧ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِى غُلَٰمٌ وَكَانَتِ ٱمْرَأَتِى عَاقِرًا
وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ ٱلْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ٨ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ
رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ
شَيْـًٔا ٩ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱجْعَل لِّىٓ ءَايَةً ۚ قَالَ ءَايَتُكَ أَلَّا
تُكَلِّمَ ٱلنَّاسَ ثَلَٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ١٠ فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ مِنَ
ٱلْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا۟ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ١١

The Trial continues

When Jaʿfar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ finished his recitation, Najjāshi said, these words and the words which ʿĪsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ came with, are both from the same source. He then said to the Qurayshi delegation that he will under no circumstance give these people up to them.

When the delegation left the court, ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ said, tomorrow I will say such a thing in front of the King that he will destroy these people.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi Rabīʿah said, do not do this as they are related to us even though they may differ in belief. ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ didn't listen to him

The following day he went to the King and said that these people say severe things about ʿĪsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ.

عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمْ

Najjāshi called the Companions again. They got very worried about how they would answer but agreed they would only say what Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ and his Messenger have said. They will not say anything against that.

The Companions arrived once again in the Kings court. Najjāshi asked them, 'What do you say regarding ʿĪsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ'. Jaʿfar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, 'That we only say what the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has said about him and that is, that he is a Slave of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, and his Messenger. And he was a special spirit from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and a special word from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.'

Najjāshi lifted a piece of wood off the floor and said, 'I swear by God, what the Muslims have said, ʿĪsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ has not said more than them equivalent to the length of this stick'.

Najjāshi then told the Muslims that they can remain in peace, even if he was given a mountain of gold he would not persecute them. He then commanded that all the gifts which were given by the Quraysh be returned to them. He said he had no need of them and Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى had given him his dominion without bribery. He would not take a bribe and hand these people over to them.

The session at the court ended. The Muslims were happy and the Qurayshi delegation had been humiliated and were in low spirits. And this is how the Quraysh returned to Makkah having failed in their plan to bring back the Muslims from Abyssinia.

Summary

As Islām started to flourish with more people embracing the new religion, the enmity of the Quraysh also increased. This new religion could affect their authority, position and control. Islām invited people towards worshipping the one True God and told people to turn away from polytheism.

Many leaders of the Quraysh openly persecuted the new followers. The poor and destitute Muslims suffered greatly at the hands of these people. Among the enemies of Islām were ʿAmr ibn Hishām or Abū Jahl as Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ named him, Abū Lahab, the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Umayyah and Ubayy ibn Khalaf and many more. They would use whatever means they could to try and turn the new followers away from Islām.

Among those new Muslims who suffered at their hands were Bilāl رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُ, the family of ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُ, Ṣuhayb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُ and Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُ. The Companions remained patient and steadfast throughout these trials and Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ elevated their statuses.

Meanwhile, the Quraysh continued asking Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ question after question, and demanded miracles, like splitting the moon in two. Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ caused this to happen but this still did not satisfy them.

To escape persecution, some of the Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia, to the land of Najjāshi who was a just Christian King.

The first migration ended when the Muslims returned to Makkah after they had falsely heard the Quraysh had embraced Islām.

The second migration was much larger, over 100 Companions, men and women went to Abyssinia. They lived there in peace, free to practise Islām without any persecution. The Quraysh then sent a delegation to convince Najjāshi to send them back. This resulted in an audience between the King, the delegation and the Muslims.

After hearing the words of the Noble Qur'ān, Najjāshi told the Muslims they could stay and live there in peace, he will not surrender them under any circumstances whatsoever.



Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
Part 5 – The Trials & Tribulations of the Early Muslims

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